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For Immediate Release

Excise Officers, Kroger Work Together to Reduce Underage Access to Alcohol

BLOOMINGTON (Oct. 29) – Indiana State Excise Police officers and a Bloomington grocery store teamed-up to reduce underage access to alcohol Friday, resulting in 21 arrested on 27 charges.

Friday night officers worked with employees at Kroger, 528 S. College Avenue, as the store sought out ways to work with police to combat underage access to alcohol.

As a result, 21 people were arrested on 27 charges, including 10 minors charged with illegal possession of alcohol. Four of them were also charged with possession of false IDs.

Excise police officers also arrested four people for theft, three for furnishing alcohol to a minor, one for criminal trespass, one for possession of marijuana, one for false informing, one for juvenile possession of tobacco and one for furnishing tobacco to a juvenile. One man was incarcerated on two outstanding arrest warrants.

In separate incidents, officers also took three people to IU Health Bloomington Hospital for treatment.

The Cops-in-Shops program is a cooperative effort between excise police and stores that sell alcoholic beverages for carryout, including drug stores, grocery stores and liquor stores. The initiative is aimed at reducing underage access to and use of alcohol. Excise officers working in plain clothes pose as customers or employees to watch for minors who attempt to purchase alcohol using false IDs or adults purchasing alcohol for minors.

The Cops-in-Shops initiative also allows excise officers to help store employees recognize false IDs. Excise officers work with employees one on one to catch minors attempting to use false IDs, including showing them clues to look for when someone presents an ID at checkout.

“In addition to the Intensified College Enforcement initiative, Cops in Shops is another important project that allows excise officers to partner with businesses to reduce minors’ access to alcohol,” Superintendent Matt Strittmatter said.

As the enforcement division of the Indiana Alcohol and Tobacco Commission, the primary mission of the Indiana State Excise Police is to promote public safety by enforcing Indiana’s Alcoholic Beverage Code. While excise officers have the authority to enforce any state law, they focus primarily on alcohol, tobacco and related laws.

All criminal and administrative-law defendants are to be presumed innocent until, and unless, proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.